

Remarks on License Renewal

**Angelina S. Howard
Senior Vice President
Nuclear Energy Institute**

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**Good afternoon. I'm Angie Howard,
senior vice president with the Nuclear
Energy Institute. I am very pleased to
have this opportunity to meet with
you today.**

**The Nuclear Energy Institute is a
Washington, D.C.-based policy
organization that represents more
than 275 U.S. and international
companies in the nuclear energy
industry.**

Our membership includes every U.S. utility that owns and operates a nuclear power plant, their suppliers, fuel cycle companies, universities, radiopharmaceutical firms and research laboratories, labor unions and law firms.

Many of the Institute's activities involve nuclear energy—which provides about 20 percent of America's electricity.

We're here today to discuss the draft supplemental environmental impact statement for Calvert Cliffs for the license renewal period.

After an extensive review, the NRC has found no significant environmental impact from license renewal for the Calvert Cliffs plant.

This review included potential environmental impacts from plant operation ... the plant's interaction with the land, water and air ... socioeconomic factors ... aquatic species ... threatened or endangered species ... and many other issues.

The NRC also thoroughly evaluated a new issue identified during the scoping review—microorganisms that live in high-radiation, high-temperature areas.

The agency concluded there is no significant impact associated with the issue.

The NRC also examined the environmental impacts of alternative energy sources, compared with the Calvert Cliffs plant.

Ultimately—when this extensive review was complete—the NRC concluded there are no environmental impacts that would preclude renewing the plant's operating license.

(Pause)

I'm here today primarily in a professional capacity, as a representative of the nuclear energy industry. But I'm also here as a resident of Anne Arundel County, just north of here.

My children love to play outside. In fact, both of them are very competitive tennis players. I want my children—and *your children*—to have clear air to breathe. As a wife and mother, I believe the clean generating capacity from this plant is needed.

So I support nuclear plant license renewal, both personally and professionally, as one who has devoted nearly 30 years to learning how these plants work *from the inside out*.

License renewal for nuclear power plants is important to our nation's energy and environmental future. This nation already can't meet clear air requirements in many areas—and that is *with* nuclear power plants on line.

**I commend the NRC for working—
through a very open and public
process—to develop a generic
environmental impact statement for
license renewal.**

**It helps ensure that no important
issues are overlooked or left
unexplored—while at the same time, it
makes the review process effective
and efficient.**

**That is what the federal government
demands of its agencies today. And
that is what American taxpayers
demand, too.**

The agency started preparing for license renewal several years ago, by identifying the types and severity of environmental impacts that could occur as a result of license renewal. The NRC concluded that many of these issues could be addressed generically—for all nuclear power plants—in a generic environmental impact statement.

The remaining potential environmental impacts must be addressed in the context of individual license renewal applications. That is what today's meeting is all about.

This approach allows the proceedings to focus on issues *germane to the individual plant* seeking license renewal—in this case, Calvert Cliffs.

The NRC plays a vital role in license renewal. But it isn't the NRC that will decide whether nuclear energy—or a particular nuclear power plant—is the right generating source for a given area. Its role is to determine—*solely from the safety standpoint*, whether a nuclear plant *may* continue to operate under a renewed license.

Over a period of years, the agency has made *tremendous* efforts to involve the public in license renewal in *meaningful ways*.

The NRC issued its first proposal for amending the environmental rule for license renewal in 1994—*five years ago*. At the same time, the agency issued a draft generic environmental impact statement, inviting public comments. That was followed by numerous rounds of public comments—including public workshops in several regions of the country.

The NRC made a number of changes in the rule in response to comments. Then it issued the final revised environmental rule in June 1996 and it became effective in August 1996.

The same open process applies to the technical part of a license renewal application. It is a process that works.

What does license renewal mean?

***Without* a renewed license, a nuclear power plant *must shut down* when its current license expires. If the region later decides that it needs the emission-free generating capacity that plant provided—it will be too late. The time for making that decision will have passed.**

But *with* a renewed license, continued operation remains an option. I happen to think it's an excellent one.

As some of you know, the NRC has taken steps to add discipline to the hearing process—both in determining whether a hearing is warranted, and in conducting a hearing if one is granted. The guidelines are straightforward. For a hearing to be granted, there must be significant new safety information to be considered.

That is a reasonable threshold.

Why put so much effort into nuclear plant license renewal? It offers three major benefits:

One, it will allow the United States to maintain economic electric generating capacity that does not produce greenhouse gases or other pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and particulates.

Two, license renewal will preserve good jobs for Americans—and substantial tax revenue for the communities where these plants are located. And ...

Three, renewal of a nuclear power plant's license is much cheaper than building new generating capacity.

Many people don't realize that nuclear energy is the largest source of emission-free electricity generation in the United States. It represents 64.5 percent of our nation's emission-free electricity generating capacity. Hydro is second, with 34.9 percent.

Photovoltaic cells and wind power each represents less than .01 percent of our nation's emission-free capacity. Geothermal contributes a bit more—0.6 percent.

Under the Clean Air Act, states are under increasingly stringent controls on emissions of sulfur oxides, particulate matter, nitrogen oxides and ground-level ozone.

As an emission-free energy source, nuclear power plants already help limit the amount of greenhouse gases emitted through electricity generation.

Most nuclear power plants are in heavily populated areas of the country that are in “non-attainment” with the Clean Air Act for ozone or other regulated pollutants—even though those areas get a large amount of electricity from emission-free nuclear plants. Non-attainment status requires these areas or states to reduce pollution in the air.

The Environmental Protection Agency has even proposed capping nitrogen oxide emissions in 22 states that contribute to non-attainment for ozone in *other* states. *Maryland is one of these 22 states.* And that's *with* the emission-free Calvert Cliffs plant on line.

That's also why it is so important that Calvert Cliffs continues to operate. Baltimore Gas and Electric Company and Duke Power Company and are only the first applicants for nuclear plant license renewal.

There will be many others. Several other utilities¹ have indicated to the NRC that they are considering license renewal. Entergy Corp. plans to complete its application by the end of this year to renew the license for its Arkansas Nuclear One plant.

Nuclear energy provides important benefits to the United States, and the communities in which these plants are located. It provides vast amounts of electricity—on demand—to support continued economic growth and our high standard of living. And it does all this without polluting the air.

¹ Entergy Operations, Florida Power & Light, Northern States Power Co., PECO Energy, Southern Nuclear Operating Co. and Virginia Power. In addition, Carolina Power & Light CEO William Cavanaugh told *Nucleonics Week* in late June that he is “pretty certain” his company will try to extend the licenses of its four nuclear units.

The fact is, the United States can't meet existing clean-air regulations without continued—and expanded—use of nuclear energy.

Thank you.